DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. By F. M. R. Walshe, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.S. Seventh edition. (Pp. xvi + 365; figs. 63. 24s.). Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. 1952.

THE publication of the seventh edition of this well-known book is a further tribute to its usefulness and to the appreciation it has received since it first appeared in print in 1940. The plan of making a selective presentation of neurological subjects especially for students and practitioners has been followed as has the method of presenting first general principles of neurological diagnosis and then chapters on space-occupying lesions in the skull, vascular disorders, epilepsy, acute infections, syphilis, disseminated sclerosis and other common conditions such as peripheral nerve lesions and trauma of the nervous system. The attention given to details of treatment is still inadequate for a book of this kind. The care of the paraplegic patient, for example, is dealt with in little more than one page and receives less attention than the description of the heredofamilial ataxias and syringomyelia. The section dealing with the psychoneuroses is also too formal or abstract to be of much value to practitioners. Other criticisms one might make are that in the chapter on cerebral tumour too little is said about early diagnosis and no mention is made of the difficulty and importance of distinguishing such cases from presenile dementia in the elderly. R. S. A.

ANATOMY OF THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM. By G. A. G. Mitchell, O.B.E., T.D., M.B., Ch.M., D.Sc., Professor of Anatomy in the University of Manchester. (Pp. xvi + 356; illustrations 131. 55s.). Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. 1953.

PROFESSOR MITCHELL is the leading British authority on the anatomy of the autonomic nervous system, having devoted twenty years to the careful, painstaking study of this field. His investigations have chiefly consisted in accurate dissections of various parts of the system, no structure being accepted as a nerve until it has been sectioned and examined histologically. He has also studied the vast literature critically, not only in its morphological aspects, but also in its relations with physiology and pathology. The result is this important monograph which incorporates his own observations, and the critically review observations of others, into a comprehensive account of the entire system.

The terms of reference of the book are frankly morphological, although the author has not hesitated to introduce physiological and clinical data where these illuminate the morphology. The book also deals specifically with man, the author pointing out that experimental data from lower animals are particlarly misleading when applied uncritically to man in this field.

After a short historical introduction there are chapters on terminology, development, general histology, cortical and subcortical representations. There follows a detailed account of the parasympathetic component, a general account of the sympathetic component, and then regional accounts of the sympathetic in the head and neck, thorax, abdomen and pelvis. There are over 800 references, and a very full index.

The illustrations are excellent, including many photographs of actual dissections and clear, accurately drawn coloured plates, all of which are original. Professor Mitchell has aimed at being deliberately provocative on some points because, as he says, "a few pebbles cast into placid pools of complacency readily display the doubts and difficulties lurking in the depths and their revelation is the first step towards their solution." Thus he refutes the prevalent idea that the autonomic nervous system is a purely efferent mechanism and he criticises the current attempts to subdivide the autonomic into adrenergic and cholinergic components. He regards the olfactory as well as the taste fibres as autonomic and even suggests that it may be well to regard proprioceptive nerves as belonging to the system also. On the vexed question of the dorsal root vaso-dilators he believes the evidence favours the existence of efferent fibres in the dorsal spinal

The book may be confidently recommended as a reference book for students, anatomists, physiologists and clinicians alike, and it is likely that it will become the classic text on the anatomy of the autonomic nervous system. J. J. P.